

OPINION 2295 (Case 3515)***Rhynchotherium* Falconer, 1868 (Mammalia; Proboscidea): usage conserved by designation of *Rhynchotherium falconeri* Osborn, 1923 as the type species**

Abstract. The Commission has conserved the generic name *Rhynchotherium* Falconer, 1868, applied to proboscidean fossils from North America, by designating *Rhynchotherium falconeri* Osborn, 1923 as the type species.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Mammalia; Proboscidea; North America; Mexico; *Rhynchotherium*; *Gomphotherium*; *Rhynchotherium falconeri*.

Ruling

- (1) Under the plenary power it is hereby ruled that all fixations of type species for *Rhynchotherium* Falconer, 1868 are set aside and *Rhynchotherium falconeri* Osborn, 1923 is designated as the type species.
- (2) The name *Rhynchotherium* Falconer, 1868 (gender: masculine), type species *Rhynchotherium falconeri* Osborn, 1923, as ruled in (1) above, is hereby placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology.
- (3) The name *falconeri* Osborn, 1923 as published in the binomen *Rhynchotherium falconeri*, specific name of the type species of *Rhynchotherium* Falconer, 1868 as ruled in (1) above, is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

History of Case 3515

An application to conserve the generic name *Rhynchotherium* Falconer, 1868, applied to proboscidean fossils from North America, by designating *Rhynchotherium falconeri* Osborn, 1923 as the type species was received from Spencer G. Lucas (*New Mexico Museum of Natural History, Albuquerque, NM 87104, U.S.A.*) on 17 February 2010. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 67: 158–162 (June 2010). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. Comments in support were published in 67: 256–257 (September 2010); 68: 78–79 (March 2011).

Decision of the Commission

On 1 September 2011 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 67: 160–161. At the close of the voting period on 1 December 2011 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes – 21: Ballerio, Bouchet, Brothers, Grygier, Halliday, Harvey, Kottelat, Krell, Kullander, Lamas, Minelli, Pape, Papp, Patterson, Rosenberg, Štys, van Tol, Winston, Yanega, Zhang and Zhou.

Negative votes – 3. Alonso-Zarazaga, Bogutskaya and Kojima.

Fautin, Lim, Ng and Pyle were on leave of absence.

Voting AGAINST, Alonso-Zarazaga explained that he considered the Principle of Priority to be the most important in the Code, since it was an objective principle. He said that the authors of this application proposed a new type species for the genus *Rhynchotherium* to save it from becoming a junior synonym of *Gomphotherium*, in a subjective action of selection of a new type species. Alonso-Zarazaga then suggested that this was not the end of the problem, as Alberdi et al. (BZN 68(1): 79) had said: ‘... and certainly we do agree that in the first instance it could be *R. falconeri*. However, this would not rule out further studies of the group in order to determine a type species that better represents the main features of this taxon.’. Alonso-Zarazaga was concerned that this could result in a new application to request the designation of a new type species. He felt that the time of *Rhynchotherium* had passed under the rules of the Code since it was synonymized with *Gomphotherium* by May (1981). He pointed out that many other ostensibly cherished names had disappeared from use in zoology by even-handed application of rules. He thought it unfortunate that May’s decision had not been followed, as he thought it was correct. He felt that the only objective and sound basis for stabilizing names that had been used 100 times in 141 years was priority. In his view, 30 years had been lost for stabilizing the name of this animal. Also voting AGAINST, Kojima said that the author of this proposal had referred to only *tlascalae* and *falconeri*, but did not state which species were included in the genus *Rhynchotherium* in his opinion.

Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists and Indexes by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

falconeri, *Rhynchotherium*, Osborn, 1923, *American Museum Novitates*, **99**: 3.

Rhynchotherium Falconer, 1868, *Palaeontological memoirs of the late Hugh Falconer...with a biographical sketch of the author*, vol. 2. p. 74.